(b) whether it is also a fact that the proposal was accepted and included in the Seventh Five Year Plan;

(c) whether any bank assistance or Asian Development Bank assistance has been sanctioned for the project; and

(d) whether Government have prepared any plan to complete the project; if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESSOURCE WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) and (b) There is neither a proposal for four-laning the entire stretch of National Highway No. 8 from Ahmedabad to Bombay (Length 502 km), nor was this provided for in the VII Five Year Plan. However, approximately 28 kms out of the total length are already 4-lane, widening to 4-lanes is in progress in about 86 kms more and Annual Plan 1990-91 contains provision for taking up four-laning in another 100 kms.

(c) No, Sir. Upto now no assistance for 4-laning of any portion of the existing National Highway between Ahmedabad and Bombay has been approved either by the Asian Development Bank or any other Bank

(d) No, Sir

**New national highways in Gujarat**

721 SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL:
SHRI JITENDRABHAI LABHSHANKER BHATT:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of Gujarat have requested the Government of India to declare five new national highways in Gujarat; and

(b) what is the reaction of the Government of India thereon?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) and (b) In June, 1990, the Chief Minister, Gujarat had proposed for declaration of 6 State roads as National Highways Further additions in the National Highways System would depend on the funds to be earmarked for it in the 8th Five Year Plan.

**Re-introduction of ship service between Rameshwaram and Talaimannar**

722. SHRI M. VINCENT: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the passenger ship from Rameshwaram to Talaimannar has been stopped;

(b) if so, whether there is any propsal to re-introduce this important service to enable foreign tourists specially from France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and Singapore to come to India.

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) and (b) The ferry service between Rameshwaram and Talaimanner remains suspended due to security and logistical reasons Given the prevailing situation in Sri Lanka, it is difficult to say when the ferry service can be resumed.

**Ship-Building yards at Tuticorin port**

723. SHRI M. VINCENT· Will the Minister of SURFAC TRANSPORT be pleased to state·

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government consideration to have two ship-building yards at Tuticorin Port;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the estimated cost involved therein; and

(c) by when this yard construction project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA) (a) There is no proposal to set up Ship-building Yards at Tuticorin Port.

(b) and (c) Do not arise

**Starting speed-post service to Nagercoil in Kanyakumari district**

724. SHRI M VINCENT Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state·

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a great need for starting Speed-Post service to Nagercoil, an important trade and business centre in Kanyakumari District; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to start this service as a priority basis?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAI PARKASH): (a) No, Sir, there is no traffic potential at Nagarcoil for introduction speed post service in the city

(b) Does not arise in view of reply to (a) above

**Trade amongst SAARC Countries**

725 SHRI VIREN J SHAH
SHRI SHANKAR DAYAL SINGH.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the study conducted by the Research and Information System for the Non-Aligned and other Developing Countries (RIS), which appeared in 'Business and Political Observer' of 6th December, 1990, especially on the observation that expansion of trade among SAARC countries has more profound economic basis than achievement of regional self-reliance,

(b) whether it is a fact that unit values realised by SAARC countries in their exports to regional countries are higher than those to the rest of the World, especially for goods where freight cost is significant;

(c) if so, whether Government would consider the proposal of providing special measures for Intra-SAARC trade in consultation with other countries to substantially increase Intra-SAARC trade accounts from the present level of a mere 2 5 per cent of the total trade of these countries; and

(d) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA) (a) Yes, Sir

(b) This is one of the conclusions of the RIS study

(c) The Government is prepared to consider any proposal for special measures for substantially expanding intra-SAARC trade

(d) Does not arise

**Steps to maintain peace in the sub-continent**

726 SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state

(a) whether the Prime Minister has expressed his willingness to adopt measures to change the present situation in the Sub-Continent and also to bring about confidence and trust in the region;

(b) whether the Prime Minister during his visit to Male, had a talk with the Prime Ministers of Pakistan and Bangladesh,

(c) if so, the outcome of the talks, and

(d) what further steps are contemplated to maintain peace in the region?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA) (a) At the Opening Session of the SAARC Summit on 21 November